

## Message Text

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21

ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SCS-01 SCA-01 L-01 PRS-01 NSC-05

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O 222205Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5846

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 325

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORS, PINS

SUBJECT: GODR ARREST AND RELEASE OF ROLANDO OTERO HERNANDEZ

WANTED IN U.S. ON CHARGE OF BOMBING FEDERAL BUILDINGS

1. THIS MORNING'S EL CARIBE PROMINENTLY CARRIED STORY, WITH AMPLE QUOTES FROM YESTERDAY'S EDITION OF MIAMI HERALD, CONCERNING GODR'S DETENTION AND RELEASE OF ROLANDO OTERO HERNANDEZ, A NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZEN, EX-CUBAN, WANTED IN THE U.S. ON A CHARGE OF PLANTING BOMBS IN GOVT BUILDINGS IN MIAMI. GODR PRESS SPOKESMAN QUOTED IN STORY AS STATING THAT OTERO WAS AT LIBERTY IN THE D.R. AND WOULD NOT BE DEPORTED. THE SPOKESMAN DENIED HOWEVER THAT PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAD MADE ANY STATEMENT OR COMMENT CONCERNING THE DOMINICAN AUTHORITIES' TREATMENT OF OTERO OR OTHER EXILED CUBANS IN THE D.R. LATTER STATEMENT EVIDENTLY REFERRED TO TELEPHONE INTERVIEW OF RETIRED DOMINICAN ADMIRAL DE WINDT TO MIAMI HERALD IN WHICH DE WINDT REPORTEDLY STATED HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY PRESIDENT BALAGUER THAT NEITHER OTERO NOR ANY OTHER CUBAN EXILE WOULD BE DEPORTED.

2. OTERO WAS ARRESTED BY DOMINICAN POLICE ON SATURDAY, JAN 17, ON CHARGE OF VIOLATING PROHIBITION ("IMPEDIMENTO") AGAINST HIS ENTRY INTO THE D.R. HE HAD ENTERED THE COUNTRY, DESPITE THE PROHIBITION, ON JAN 4. F.B.I. AGENTS HAD INFORMED EMBASSY OF HIS PRESENCE IN  
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COUNTRY AND OF CHARGE AGAINST HIM. DOMINICAN POLICE AUTHORITIES,

IN CONVERSATIONS WITH FBI AGENTS AND EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER, HAD INDICATED DISPOSITION TO EXPEL HIM FROM COUNTRY AND TO DETAIN HIM UNTIL THIS WAS ARRANGED.

3. ON SUNDAY, JAN 18, HOWEVER, POLICE OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION FOR OTERO'S EXPULSION WOULD HAVE TO BE OBTAINED FROM PALACE AND THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL, TO THIS END, FOR EMBASSY TO MAKE KNOWN ITS INTEREST IN THE CASE AT THAT LEVEL. THAT AFTERNOON, EMBASSY OFFICER REPORTED ON STATUS OF CASE IN TELEPHONE CALL TO DEPT AND LATE THAT EVENING CHARGE OBTAINED DEPT CLEARANCE TO MAKE INFORMAL APPROACH TO PRESIDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY (JOSE QUEZADA) ON U.S. INTEREST IN OTERO'S RETURN TO U.S. TO FACE CHARGES AGAINST HIM. THIS WAS CONSIDERED THE MOST APPROPRIATE COURSE SINCE ALL GOVT DECISIONS ON MATTERS OF ANY IMPORTANCE AND EVEN ON MATTERS OF MINOR IMPORTANCE EMANATE FROM PRESIDENT.

3. ON MONDAY MORNING JAN 19, CHARGE TELEPHONED ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO EXPRESS EMBASSY'S INTEREST IN THE CASE, NOTING OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT OTERO HAD ENTERED COUNTRY ILLEGALLY AND WAS SUBJECT TO DEPORTATION UNDER DOMINICAN LAW AND IF THAT WAS SO, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL AND APPROPRIATE TO EXPEL HIM TO THE U.S., WHICH HAD A STRONG INTEREST IN SECURING HIS RETURN TO FACE INDICTMENT AGAINST HIM. QUEZADA RESPONDED SYMPATHETICALLY, INDICATING HE WOULD TAKE MATTER UP WITH PRESIDENT, THOUGH LATTER WAS VERY OCCUPIED. IN RESPONSE TO FOLLOW-UP CALL THAT EVENING, QUEZADA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT PRESIDENT WAS INFORMED ABOUT MATTER, THOUGH HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DISCUSS EMBASSY'S APPROACH WITH HIM, BUT HE WOULD PURSUE IT AT FIRST OPPORTUNITY THAT EVENING OR FOLLOWING DAY.

4. ON TUESDAY MORNING, HAVING HEARD THAT EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE AT PALACE BY FRIENDS OF OTERO TO OBTAIN HIS RELEASE, CHARGE ASKED QUEZADA FOR APPOINTMENT TO DISCUSS MATTER MORE EXTENSIVELY WITH HIM AND MEETING WAS ARRANGED FOR NOON THAT DAY. SHORTLY BEFORE MEETING, HOWEVER, POLICE CHIEF INFORMED CONSUL GENERAL THAT HE HAD ORDERS TO RELEASE OTERO AT NOON. AT MEETING WITH QUEZADA, CHARGE REVIEWED CHARGES AGAINST OTERO, NOTED STRONG U.S. INTEREST IN HIS RETURN AND REITERATED UNDERSTANDING THAT HE WAS IN COUNTRY ILLEGALLY AND THEREFORE IT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH DOMINICAN LAW TO DEPORT HIM. QUEZADA BLANDLY ASSERTED THAT COOPERATION WAS INDEED IMPORTANT TO BRING TERRORISTS TO JUSTICE AND SAID HE WOULD PURSUE CONFIDENTIAL

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CASE WITH PRESIDENT AS A MATTER OF URGENCY. HE HAS HOWEVER STILL MADE NO RESPONSE TO THIS APPROACH.

5. THAT EVENING, FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR'S RETURN AND ON HIS INSTRUCTIONS, DCM TOOK OCCASION AT SOCIAL FUNCTION TO TALK PRIVATELY WITH FOREIGN UNDERSECRETARY ABOUT THE CASE, RECALLING GODR REQUEST FOR EXTRA SECURITY MEASURES SEVERAL MONTHS AGO FOR PROTECTION AGAINST BOMBING THREATS BY EX-CUBAN TERRORISTS, AND INDICATING PERPLEXITY

AT RELEASE IN COUNTRY OF SOMEONE ACCUSED OF SUCH CRIME WHO WAS UNDER DOMINICAN LAW SUBJECT TO DEPORTATION FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY. THE FOREIGN UNDERSECRETARY STATED SHE WOULD COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH PRESIDENT ABOUT MATTER.

6. MEANWHILE, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHERE OTERO IS AT THE MOMENT. IN INTERVIEW YESTERDAY, EX-ADMIRAL DE WINDT REPORTEDLY TOLD MIAMI HERALD THAT OTERO HAD LEFT COUNTRY, BUT MIAMI HERALD CORRESPONDENT DAN BOHNING, NOW IN SANTO DOMINGO, TOLD CONGEN HE HAD DRINKS WITH OTERO LAST NIGHT.  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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